
**TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP
of the
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**July 22, 2008
Minutes**

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY WORKING GROUP. AN AUDIOCASSETTE TAPE OF THE ACTUAL MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING IN SCAG'S OFFICE.

The Meeting of the Transportation Conformity Working Group was held at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.

In Attendance:

Abrishami, Lori	MTA
Poe, Lisa	SANBAG
McDonald, Brian	TASAN
Shavit, Avital	MTA

SCAG Staff

Amayta, Naresh
Asuncion, John
Ayala, Rosemary
Gutierrez, Pablo
Nadler, Jonathan
Sherwood, Arnie
Stewart, Justus

Via Teleconference:

Alvarez, Grace	RCTC
Behtash, Arman	Caltrans, District 12
Brady, Mike	Caltrans Headquarters
Cacatian, Ben	Ventura County APCD
Dehaan, Peter	VCTC
Fagan, Paul	Caltrans, District 8
Varma, Naresh	San Bernardino County
Gonzales, Bruce	Caltrans, District 8
Kratovil, Aimee	FHWA
Higgins, Katherine	SCAQMD
Johnson, Sandy	Caltrans, District 11
Kim, Michele	San Bernardino County

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Lopez, Rosa	IVAG
Louka, Tony	Caltrans, District 8
Morris, Michael	FHWA
Petre, Ed	San Bernardino County
Wade, Dennis	ARB
Walecka, Carla	Transportation Corridor Agencies
Yoon, Andrew	Caltrans, District 7

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments.

3.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

3.1 Approval Item

3.1.1 TCWG June 24, 2008 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

4.1 RTP Update

Naresh Amatya, SCAG, stated that staff was moving forward with the amendment to the 2008 RTP as well as a consistency amendment to the RTIP. The primary purpose of the amendment is to incorporate the "Hot Lane" demo project in Los Angeles County. The two corridors being considered for funding at this time are the I-10 and the SR-210. Staff is continuing to work with Metro to get the information needed to begin the conformity and other analyses.

Additionally, staff has also contacted the CTC's and IVAG requesting that they inform SCAG by the end of July if they have project changes that need to be included in this amendment.

Staff's goal is to complete the analytical work and conformity analysis by the end of August. Staff hopes to release the document for public review and comment by October 2008 and finalize for adoption by the end of the year.

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4.2 RTIP Update

John Asuncion, SCAG, reported that the public review for 2006 RTIP Amendment #19 ended yesterday. No comments were received. The amendment will be mailed today to Caltrans and the Federal agencies for their approval. There are numerous transit projects in this amendment and the transit operators are requesting an expedited approval process for Amendment #19.

The 2008 RTIP has been completed and is currently being reproduced. The target date on mailing the document to State and Federal Agencies for approval is July 28th.

Pablo Gutierrez, SCAG, discussed the comments received on the 2008 RTIP. The 30-day public comment period ended on July 7th, and seven comments were received from various agencies, including Caltrans. A matrix has been circulated to the TCWG with the 2008 RTIP comments and responses.

4.3 Review of PM Hot Spot Interagency Review Forms

- 1) LA49160** – Construct a new half interchange along I-405 at Arbor Vitae Street..

It was determined that this is not a POAQC pending concurrence by EPA.

- 2) LALSO4** – 6TH Street Viaduct

It was determined that this is not a POAQC pending concurrence by EPA.

- 3) ORA030603** – Construct an auxiliary lane in the southbound direction of State Route 55.

It was determined that this is not a POAQC.

- 4) SBD031426** – Safety project that consists of approximately 17 miles of safety improvements along Needles Highway.

It was determined that this is not a POAQC pending concurrence by EPA.

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SDBD4351 and SBD200451, pending projects from last months meeting, were then taken up for discussion. Staff requested that Caltrans update the forms as requested by the TCWG last month and send them back to SCAG. SCAG will forward the updated forms to appropriate parties seeking concurrence on a “Not a POAQC” designation.

4.4 TCM Overview

Jonathan Nadler, SCAG, stated that impetus for this discussion is 1) some stakeholders have raised questions as to why certain projects are defined as TCMs, 2) the resources involved in the timely implementation process, and 3) the inefficiency of going through TCM substitution for projects such as bus stop improvement programs where there are little or no identifiable air quality benefits.

Mr. Nadler discussed the current process by which projects are classified as TCM type projects (i.e., based on examples provided in the Clean Air Act), how TCM type projects become committed TCMs (i.e., are programmed for right-of-way or construction funding in the first two years of the RTIP) and become part of the SIP (i.e., approval of the RTIP), and are tracked for timely implementation during each conformity analysis.

Mr. Nadler stated that the TCWG took up a similar discussion during the 2007 South Coast AQMP development, and put forth some suggestions to improve and make the process more efficient. For example, it was suggested that bike lane projects should be tracked in aggregate by County for timely implementation. This and other suggestions did not get implemented, seemingly because of the efforts needed to make changes to the long standing practice.

Sandy Johnson, Caltrans District 11, stated that it would make sense for such projects to be considered TCM’s because of the definition in the Clean Air Act and also to give them funding priority. What appears to be the issue is the substitution process. If the emission benefits of the project cannot be quantified, then a qualitative analysis should be allowed so the region could do a similar project. Mr. Nadler responded that it was not the substitution process that was an issue, it was the timely implementation process which may lead to the requirement to substitute.

Aimee Kratovil, FHWA, stated that FHWA is spending an inordinate amount of resources in its review process for timely implementation of very small projects

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which may have insignificant or no air quality benefit. As a result, the FHWA would support a change in SCAG's RTIP Guidelines that would filter out such projects and focus on those that make more sense to be a TCM and worth the resources for tracking.

Katherine Higgins, SCAQMD, agreed with Aimee Kratovil. If the TCWG can develop a streamlined process for smaller TCM's and their substitutions within statute, the SCAQMD would support it. The TCM process has been discussed at the SCAQMD over the last couple of years, and the TCWG will be getting comments on this issue from the SCAQMD.

Jonathan Nadler stated that he would initiate a sub-group meeting with the air agencies to start moving this item forward.

5.0 INFORMATION SHARING

Jonathan Nadler stated that EPA has released a proposed rule to account for a court decision regarding the provision in the Phase 2 8-hour ozone implementation rule that allowed credit toward reasonable further progress (RFP) for the 8-hour standard from emission reductions outside the nonattainment area. This had been discussed previously at TCWG.

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

Jonathan Nadler adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

The next Transportation Conformity Working Group meeting will be held on August 26, 2008 at the SCAG office in Los Angeles.